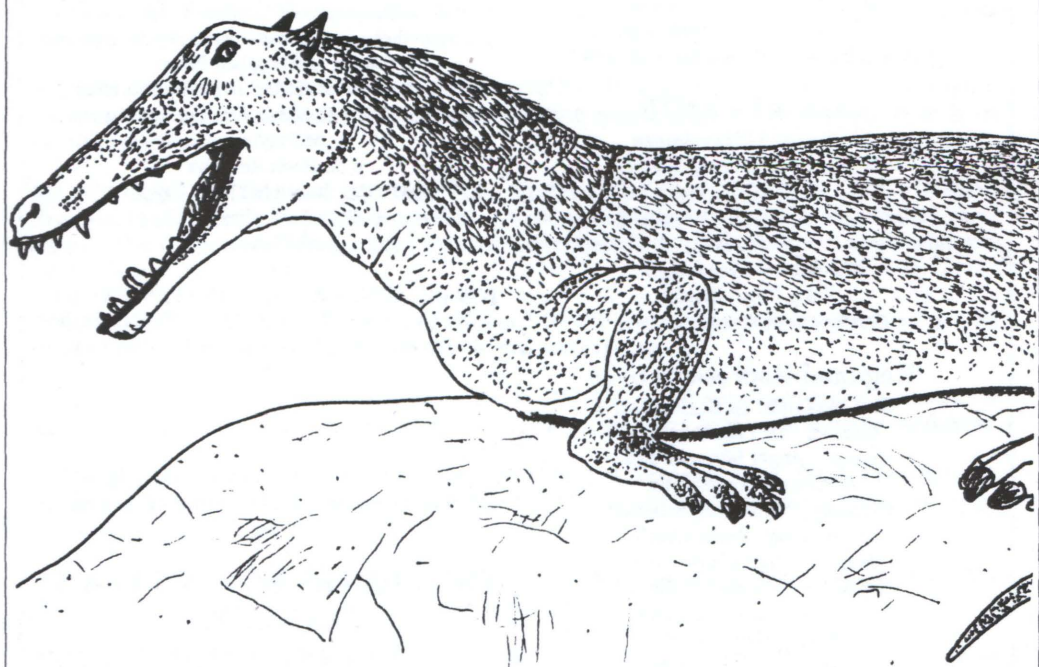


Animals & Men

The Journal of the Centre for Fortean Zoology



**Mystery Whales .. The Bodmin
Skull .. On Collecting a Cryptid ..
Strangeness in Scotland**

Issue Seven

£1.75

This issue of 'Animals & Men' was put together by the following band of Animals and Men:

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FOR REASONS OF SPACE, HELP, NERVOUS
TWITCH, AND THE A-Z HAVE BEEN HELD
OVER TO THE NEXT ISSUE IN JANUARY
1996

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The Great Days of Zoology are not done.

Dear friends,

Welcome to issue seven, the fourth of the year. We are about a fortnight late because we wanted to wait until the new books by Karl Shuker and Bernard Heuvelmans were released. We have also found a way of cutting our printing costs so, at least for this issue, we have added an extra four pages without increasing the cost. We now have twelve pages more than we did a year ago.

The results of our readers poll were interesting. It seems that the 'Animals & Men' readership is equally divided between zoologists and fortune-tellers, and it also seems, (encouragingly for us), that even the most academic zoologists have a sneaking interest in things weird and vice versa. What was noticeable, however, is that whereas most of the readers who replied were satisfied with the balance between popular and academic a significant minority wanted to see a greater academic bias in the magazine.

We have taken this on board with the start of a major new series on Cryptocetology, as well as some other research papers planned for inclusion over the next year. We have also, however decided to produce an annual collection of longer, and more in depth material. The first volume; "THE CFZ YEARBOOK 1996" is now available. It costs £10.00 and is over 180 pages long with 53 figures and 22 maps. We hope that this will be a success and that we shall publish a similar collection in time for Christmas each year.

With this issue we also welcome the eminent cryptozoologist Grover S. Krantz who has written an article for this issue. We would also like to like to welcome Clinton Keeling, the veteran zoologist and zoo-keeper to our editorial consultants panel. The panel now consists of three zoologists and a wizard, which seems just about right to us.

One of the biggest problems that we have at the CFZ, even with the publication of our new book, is assimilating, and recycling the sheer volume of information which comes through our office. This means that there is no room in this issue, the Hooded Seal that ended up in Cornwall, the indian spiders on the south coast or the mysterious carcasse found at Mount Edgecombe in Cornwall (it turned out to be a dog).

Morgawr has also turned up again, (seen by Gertrude (G.S) Stephens in September), and also in the Falmouth area, an unnamed American student saw the Owlman of Mawnan, only weeks after we published a new eyewitness account in the last issue. More on these and other stories next year.

The next issue will be out in January, so until then, all of us at 'Animals & Men' wish you a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. 1996 will be a year to look forward to.



NEWSFILE

COMPILED AND EDITED BY OUR RESIDENT NEWSHOUND JAN WILLIAMS

NEW SPECIES

CHINESE BEARS

Chinese scientists exploring a nature reserve in the province of Shaanxi have discovered two previously unknown species of the Giant Panda with grey or white fur.

As described in Dr Karl Shuker's *'The Lost Ark'* (Collins 1993) white bears are depicted on ancient Chinese manuscripts and have previously been captured in Shennongjia, a similarly mountainous region of Hubei Province, south of Shaanxi.

The bamboo-shoot diet of normal Giant Pandas is in dispute. Xinhua, the Chinese Press Agency, referred to dozens of cases where pandas have killed calves and goats in recent years, following a report in Beijing newspaper *'Beihui Bao'* of a panda observed eating a sheep in Sichuan province. Since pandas are considered good luck symbols and protected by law, the shepherd held back his guard dogs and allowed the animal to continue feeding.

Less restraint was shown by a gang in nearby Gansu, where police confiscated three Giant Panda skins and arrested 12 people for peddling them. Police said the gang was the largest they had broken up in the area, involving 37 people in Gansu and Sichuan. (*Die Welt* 5.8.95, *15.8.95*, *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 2.8.95)

HORSE-HEADED SNAKE

Marine biologists have discovered twenty new species of ocean creatures in an area of murky water south-west of Tasmania. The water is saturated with mud from the hills of the Southwest National Park. One animal has the body of a snake and the head of a sea-horse, and others are described as resembling creatures from Science Fiction movies. (*Westfalenpost* 7.6.95)

ELUSIVE TORTOISE

In 1963, Australian John Cann found tortoise hatchlings in Sydney pet stores. Cann was unable to identify them and the retailers refused to say where they came from. Eventually Cann was able to locate the supplier who was incubating eggs which he had collected from the Mary River, Queensland.

The new species has been named the Mary River Tortoise '*Elusor macrurus*' (Elusor meaning 'to escape notice'). Its characteristics include a laterally flattened tail which, in the male, is larger than any previously known chelid and can be up to 70% of the carapace length. (*The Vivarium*)

LIZARDS AND AMAZONS

A species of all-female lizard has been discovered in the West Indies and South America. The lizards reproduce without male contact, laying unfertilised eggs that develop into identical females for generation after generation. It appears they derive from hybrids of two species that reproduce normally.

Herpetologist Charles J. Cole and colleagues at the American Museum of Natural History identified the parents of the species by unravelling its genetics, as *Gymnophthalmus underwoodii*. (*The Vivarium*/ *National Geographic Magazine*)

TINIEST PRIMATE RETURNS

The world's tiniest primate - the Pygmy Mouse Lemur - has been restored to full species status as a result of fieldwork by Jutta Schmid and Peter Kappeler of the German Primate Centre. The lemur (*Microcebus myoxinus*) was first described in 1852, but has been considered by many to be a sub-species of the larger Grey Mouse Lemur (*Microcebus murinus*). (*New Scientist* 15.7.95)

CHINESE WILDMAN EXPEDITION

A thirty-strong expedition, led by Professor Yuan Zhengxin of the Institute of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Paleoanthropology in Beijing, and Wang Fangchen, secretary-general of the recently-formed Committee for Research on Rare and Strange Creatures, spent two months searching for evidence of the Wildman in the isolated Shennongjia mountain range in Hubei Province.

The results of this preliminary exploration were not very encouraging, but the search did produce some potential evidence in the form of teeth found in a cave and described as 'larger than human teeth', and hair samples consisting of long thin strands of red fibre.

Tourist officials in the Shennongjia Natur Reserve have posted an 80,000 dollar reward for the capture of a live wildman. A dead specimen will bring 8,000 dollars, while 1,500 dollars is being offered for authentic hair and droppings. Wang Fangchen reacted angrily: 'This kind of hunt should be absolutely prohibited. It is uncivilised action. Maybe there is only one wildman left, and it could mean the end of that wildman's life'. (*Minneapolis-St Paul Star & Tribune* 15.7.95, *The Times* 8.4.95, *Daily Mail* 5.8.95)

TUATARA PUZZLE

The New Zealand Department of Conservation is investigating the origin of a tuatara found on the north-

-eastern coast of North Island. The large healthy male was discovered by two medical students at Tūmukaka, near Whangerei.

The lizard-like tuatara is the sole surviving representative of the rynchocephalians, which flourished 150 million years ago. They exist only on islands in Cook Strait and off the north-east coast of New Zealand, although fossil specimens have been found on the mainland.

Tuatara are strictly protected by the New Zealand Government, but reputed to fetch tens of thousands of pounds on the black market. The animal is probably a smuggled escapee, but conservation officials are checking the more exciting possibility that a previously undiscovered colony exists on the mainland. *(The Times 27.5.95)*

BEAR IN DOLOMITES

For the first time in 160 years, a brown bear has been seen in the Dolomites. Mountain trekker Armando Vecoglio Galeno saw the animal near the Italian mountain town of Cortina D'Ampezzo. *'The bear was 30 metres in front of me, rose on its hind legs and made a terrifying sound', Galeno reported.*

The last known bear in the Dolomites was killed in 1830, though tracks were found in 1876. *(Westfalenpost 5.6.95)*

'WILD BEAST' OF THE ALPS

Swiss police and Italian border guards armed with night-sight equipment hunted a marauding 'beast' in the Alpine valley of Val Ferret in August. The animal, resembling a German Shepherd dog, but with longer hair and dark fur with light spots, is said to have killed about 70 sheep, twenty on one single occasion. *(Westfalenpost 24.8.95)*

GRUNTS FROM THE LOCH

Strange sounds were heard from the depths of Loch Ness in July. Scientist Bill Bolton from the survey team and five tourists aboard a miniature submarine near Abriachan on the west bank of the loch heard sounds described as *'like a grunt - a very deep grunt'*, detected by the sub's transducers.

'We first heard the noises in the same area a few weeks ago and ignored them,' said Mr Bolton. 'On three or four separate occasions we heard the noises in an area of about a square mile.'

Allan Whitfield, another member of the scientific team, said: *'I have frequently heard the calls of sea mammals. But this was odd and it certainly poses a few interesting questions'.*

It would be premature to attribute the grunts to the monster, and neither scientist is prepared to so. However, it should perhaps be noted that grunts have been associated with Nessie on a previous occasion.

In a rare land sighting in April 1923, Alfred Cruickshank reported a creature with a twelve-foot humped body and 10 - 12 foot tail beside the Invermoriston road. as he drove past the animal it made a grunting noise. In contrast to the classic long-necked Nessie pose, this creature's head seemed to be set close to its body. (*Sunday Telegraph* 30.7.95)

MYSTERY CATS

SOMERSET

Film of a large black cat at Pawlett, near Bridgewater, was shown on Sky TV on 9th August. Wayne Broad saw the animal in a field near his home and took 3 minutes of camcorder footage showing the cat sitting and walking. He later filmed a domestic cat in the same place and from the same distance (200 yards). The domestic cat barely showed above the stubble. (*Sky News* 9.8.95, *Guardian* 10.8.95)

WILTSHIRE

A big black cat was seen in the Woodford Valley on 29th August. Francesca Mamer of Netton saw the animal walk into her garden just after 9 am. She said: *'It was about 20 yards away from me . . . I noticed it had large green eyes and an enormous tail. It was black, jet black, and smooth coated. It was taller than a normal cat, more like a dog.'* (*Salisbury Journal* 31.8.95)

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

A mini-catflap ran throughout July and August in the Buckingham/Winslow area. The Buckingham & Winslow Advertiser appealed for sightings of the 'Beast of Horwood', opened a 'Beastline', offered a #100 reward for photos and gave away badges inscribed *'I have seen the Beast'*.

Most reports concerned a black, Labrador-sized cat seen by drivers and cyclists on roads between Great and Little Horwood, Winslow, Buckingham and Swanbourne. The animal had been seen sporadically in the area for at least two years.

Witness Ted Reeves, a gamekeeper for 24 years, said the animal is definitely not a dog or fox: *'It's a member of the cat family.'* Milkman Mervyn Jenner has seen the animal twice, and believes he has also heard it: *'I've heard the most God-awful noises . . . It was a horrendous guttural noise and it sounded like it was killing something.'*

John Dagg heard similar noises whilst camping near Little Horwood in April. *'It was a low guttural growling noise, about 20-25 feet from the tent. And I think there were two of them because about 40 feet away there was another similar noise with a hiss in it.'* (*Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser* 7.7.95, 14.7.95, 21.7.95, 28.7.95, 11.8.95)

HIGHLAND, SCOTLAND

A black cat, longer and taller than a Labrador, ran out of woodland onto the Inverness - Craig Dunain road on 22nd June. Witness Carol MacFadyen braked hard and watched the animal bound across the road 15 feet ahead. She and her teenage daughter and friend jumped out of the car and chased after it, but, she said, *'it was gone in a flash'*. A second sighting occurred in the same area 3 days later.

A large cat-like animal was seen by a driver at the Doll, Brora, on 22nd June. The witness described it as the height of a large dog, with a long body and long, curving tail which trailed along the ground. It was dark grey-black with a small head, flattened snout and small ears. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 27.6.95)

TAYSIDE, SCOTLAND

A public warning was issued by Fife police on 26th June, advising people not to approach a giant wild cat seen in thick woodlands near Kelty. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 27.6.95)

GRAMPIAN, SCOTLAND

Lorry driver Norman Russell was startled by a huge black cat which bounded across the Kintore to Duncrichton road, near Leylodge, on 14th August. He said: 'It was an enormous beast about 6 feet long and two and a half feet tall . . . It leapt over the twenty-foot wide road in just 3 steps. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 15.8.95)

ITALY

A puma and a panther are reported to be roaming the Umbria region, 200 km north of Rome. Sheep, calves and chickens have been killed in the area. (*Die Bild* 17.8.95)

DENMARK

Danish police were hunting a 'lion-like' cat on the island of Fyn in May. The animal, described as 28-33 inches in length (obviously a miniature lion), was originally seen in a field near Odense and further reports were received from various locations on the eastern side of the island. (*Die Welt* 25.5.95)

ESCAPES

Two lions and a lioness escaped from a safari park at Warragamba on the outskirts of Sydney, Australia, on 7th August. The lioness knocked down a garden fence and attacked a collie. The dog survived, but the lioness was shot dead by an animal handler. The two other lions roamed the suburbs for about two hours before being lured back to their cages. (*Daily Telegraph* 8.8.95)

Fifteen escaped lions were tracked down and shot by law enforcement officers in Idaho. The lions came from the Ligertown Game Farm, a ramshackle private zoo consisting of sheds and makeshift cages fenced in with chicken wire, near the tourist town of Lava Hot Springs. The zoo was home to nearly 50 lions, tigers and cross-bred ligers.

Up to 50 gunmen from the Sheriff's Department and other agencies were drafted in to hunt for the big cats. Some were shot right beside the compound, others fled into rugged, heavily-wooded terrain before being killed. Ligertown owners Robert Fieber and Dotti Martin were attacked by one of the escaping animals and needed hospital treatment for minor injuries. Humane Society officials were called in to care for the remaining animals. (*Daily Mail* 23.9.95)

Hundreds of visitors fled a safari park in Co. Antrim on 2nd August when 3 chimpanzees broke free and

started wrecking cars. One smashed the window of a cafe where twenty people had taken refuge. The three chimps escaped from a concrete compound at the Causeway Safari Park, Devock, near Ballymoney. (*Aberdeen Evening Express* 3.8.95)

I THOUGHT I SAW A . . .

Police caught a wallaby at Brentwood, Essex, after it was spotted hopping alongside the M25. It is believed to have escaped from a private zoo. (*Guardian* 10.8.95)

An animal seen chasing sheep on a South Molton, Devon, farm was believed by observers to be a wolverine. It was last seen heading towards Combesland. (*Independent* 2.9.95)

A man in Rochester, Kent, who thought he saw a bird in the window box of his flat 70 feet above ground looked again and realised it was a four-foot-long iguana. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 4.8.95)

CROCS RUN AMOK

A fisherman in Belgium, angling for pike, was astonished to find his catch was a 3-foot crocodile. He hit it with a piece of wood. (*Die Bild* 2.6.95)

Fishermen reporting an alligator in Kissena Park Lake, New York City, were proved justified when Richard Wills, formerly of San Diego Zoo, captured it bare-handed. The 3-foot male alligator was caught on 26th July at the small lake in the borough of Queens. Parks Commissioner Henry Stern said: 'We believe this is an escaped pet'. (*Minneapolis Star & Tribune* 28.7.95, *Mankato Free Press* 28.7.95)

Heavily armed hunters and police patrolled ditches and canals in Numansdorp, near Rotterdam, after a reptile owner reported his caiman missing. The Dutch daily 'De Telegraaf' warned readers 'The meat-eating reptile comes straight from the jungle and ferociously attacks humans without mercy'. The scare came to an abrupt end when the pet owner returned home and found the caiman hiding in a cupboard. (*Westfalenpost* 23.8.95)

KILLER FROGS

Killer Frog Fever swept London when the 'Evening Standard' ran a campaign against North American Bullfrogs. The frogs, which are on sale in petshops, and also arriving as spawn stuck to garden-centre plants, are said to be breeding in ponds in Clapham. They can reach a length of 8 inches and could cause serious damage to British pond life, eating newts and common frogs, as well as clearing a pond of tadpoles and insect life.

An early suggestion by the 'Standard' that kittens form part of the Bullfrog's diet (rapidly inflated to 'cats' in London offices), was later downgraded to hamsters. The Department of the Environment warned that allowing the frogs to escape into the wild is an offence carrying an unlimited fine under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. (*London Evening Standard* 26.7.95, 4.8.95, 8.8.95, 10.8.95)

BREEDING TERRAPINS

East Sussex Wildlife Rescue have launched a survey to discover whether terrapins are breeding in Britain. Of particular concern is the Red Eared Terrapin (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) which is imported in large numbers. Dr Tony Gent of English Nature stated: 'Viable eggs have been produced in Britain, so the potential is there. Most counties probably have a pond with one or two in it. One Cardiff pond has several hundred.' (*Daily Telegraph* 14.8.95)

SPIDERS CLOSE SCHOOL

Bembridge Primary School on the Isle of Wight was closed down on 5th October while public health officials attempted to destroy a colony of poisonous spiders. The decision was taken after a bite from one of the spiders developed into a six-inch black bruise on classroom assistant Helen Blake's shoulder. The spiders, *Steatoda nobilis*, are members of the Black Widow family and come from Madeira and the Canary Islands. They were first recorded in Britain in 1870, arriving in shipments of fruit, and attained breeding status in the 1960s in Hampshire and Dorset. They are now well established in the South of England. Experts warned that the fumigation attempt is unlikely to succeed and *Steatoda nobilis* - nicknamed the Bembridge Black - will continue to roam the school classrooms. (*Daily Mail* 5.10.95)

A two and a half inch long Rhinoceros Beetle, thought to be the first ever in Britain, was found on a banana boat at Newhaven harbour. The mahogany-coloured beetle from the Ivory Coast, West Africa, is being cared for at the Living World natural history exhibition at Seven Sisters Country Park, near Seaford, East Sussex. (*Daily Mail* 25.7.95, *Eastbourne Gazette* 2.8.95)

FISHY STORIES

A foot-long piranha was caught by 13-year-old Andy Richardson in a pond near his home at Hoyland, South Yorkshire. (*Guardian* 10.8.95)

Piranhas are living in the Menago River between Verona and Lake Garda, Italy. Pet shop owner Stefano Poledri saw the fish near the village of Casaleone, then met an angler who had caught one. A biologist confirmed that it was a piranha. The Mayor of Casaleone has warned swimmers to stay out of the water. 'Experts have advised me that these fish feel stressed living in cold water, and are even more vicious than normal ones', he said. (*Die Welt* 29.6.95, *Daily Mail* 30.6.95)

An unusual fish caught by angler Brian Coughill's dog Sheeba in the Kessock Firth, Inverness, turned out to be a rare Angler Fish. The only one seen in the area previously was washed up dead on the shore. (*Aberdeen Evening Express* 3.8.95)

A 'fish from Hell' on display in a shop window at Swanland, near Hull, has been identified by Theresa Redding of the University of Hull as a rarely-seen Sail-finned Rough Shark. The shark, which lives at depths of more than 800 feet, was dredged up by Scottish fishermen and bought in Hull market by fishmonger Glad Hartley's son. The university plans to preserve the shark as an exhibit. (*Daily Mail* 6.10.95)

Fish were dissolved by hydrochloric acid in the River Cuckmere following a leak from a storage tank at Chenaide, in Hailsham, East Sussex. (*Daily Telegraph* 18.7.95)

GIANT TURTLE

A giant turtle sparked a sea rescue alert at Kingswear, Devon. Brixham Lifeboat, a Royal Navy helicopter, and coastguards searched the coast following a report of an upturned dinghy drifting towards rocks at the mouth of the River Dart. When the helicopter swooped down, the crew realised the object was a turtle. There have been several reports of an 8-foot hump-backed turtle off the South Devon coast. (*The Vivarium*)

PLAGUE OF MICE

British summertime plagues of biting ladybirds, thrips, saw-fly larvae, and aggressive Mediterranean median wasps, pale into insignificance in comparison with the estimated 1 billion mice devastating grain crops in Queensland. The mouse plague is the worst ever seen, stretching 220 miles from Toowoomba to Roma and Dalby, and affecting 750,000 acres of farmland. State cabinet approval has been given to bomb the mice with strychnine. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 15.8.95)

RARE REMAINS

Police and customs officers uncovered a huge collection of remains of some of the world's most endangered animals in a raid on the home of a taxidermist. A 40-year-old Dutchman was arrested in the raid at Newtown, Powys, on 15th August. Every room in the house was filled with animals, many still in freezers waiting to be cured.

Investigators found the skull of a Monkey-Eating Phillipine Eagle, the skin of a Komodo Dragon and the skin and head of a Red Panda. Stuffed chimpanzees, frozen black jaguar cubs, tiger skins and hundreds of bird specimens were among the remains. Crawford Allen, an investigator with Traffic, the WWF's wildlife trade monitoring programme, said: 'The final list will read like a roll-call of endangered species'. (*Aberdeen Press & Journal* 16.8.95, 17.8.95)

Newsfile Correspondents:

Tom Anderson, Karl Shuker, Wolfgang Schmidt, Richard Muirhead, COUDI, Phil Bennett, Sally Parsons, Keith Williams.

Lest We Forget

This issue of 'Animals & Men' is dedicated to the memory of Jerry Garcia and Bert the Capybara both of whom who have died within the past three months. What a long strange trip its been!

A Caseful of Cougars.

by Jonathan Downes

The events of the long hot summer of 1995 have proved one thing at least. The ongoing saga of 'The Beast of Bodmin' is not simply a zoological problem. It is a genuine sociological phenomenon, it is a political football, it has real folkloric and cultural implications, and somewhere at the bottom of it, I strongly suspect there are a few 'real' (whatever that means) cats, (probably pumas), who are as confused by the whole affair as the rest of us.

I was fairly pivotally involved in the events of this July and August and I could not let the October issue of 'Animals & Men' pass by without making some comment on them.

Tony 'Doc' Shiels is a good friend of mine. I spent some of the summer with him drinking red wine, gazing at the sky, & and trying to unravel some of the strands of the ongoing mystery that has become part of what in A&M6 he described as 'The Case'. It is, I think interesting how some of the same strands are evident in the 'Bodmin Skull' affair, as were exhibited in the 1976 'Owlman of Mawnan' flap. I would suggest that before reading any further, the interested would be surrealmist refer, briefly at least to Tony's article 'The Case ... for Owlperson' in A&M6.

The skull at the centre of the mystery. Although it has been shown to be a fake, its exact provenance is still unknown.



(NOTE: My attempts at a surrealmist approach to this problem, do not effect my attitudes to cryptozoology as a whole. As a forteen zoologist, I feel that different investigations warrant different approaches, and this 'case' presents so many bizarre aspects that a surrealmist approach is well nigh obligatory).

GRIM SUMMER (G.S).

The weather in Britain this summer has on occasion been the hottest on record. Many people, including ex-colonial types who usually thrive in hot weather, suffered unduly. It was very reminiscent of the summer of 1976, which in Cornwall, at least produced UFO reports, bizarre animal mutilations, Sea Serpent Reports, Lights in the sky, Strange 'crackling' noises, and not the least the 'Owlman of Mawnan'. 'Doc' described the weather both then and now as 'unhealthily' hot. He said that the heat was 'unwholesome and destructive' and many people would have agreed with him. There was a plethora of inner city riots, and the newspapers were full of urban violence, rapes and child murders. It was not a summer to remember with any degree of pleasure.

Late one night I was driving back to Exeter from Taunton with a transit van load of musician friends when we saw the strange lights in the sky. The horizon was lit up by what seemed to be explosions but which were totally silent. Fun and Games were afoot.

GENUINELY STUPID? (G.S).

Despite the quotes attributed to me in several local papers, I never said that the MAFF report into 'The Beast of Bodmin' was "Rubbish". I merely expressed disappointment with its findings. I have always had the gravest reservations about all the video and photographic evidence of Big Cats from Bodmin Moor, and I am quite in agreement with the main conclusions of the report which were essentially that the video and photographic evidence presented together with the sheep kills that they examined did not constitute proof that there were big cats living on the moor. This is, as any solicitor will tell you, completely different to stating, as is commonly believed, that there are 'categorically no big cats on the moor!'.

Being seen in certain quarters as somewhat of a pundit in matters crypto, not to mention zoological, I was approached by a number of newspapers and a couple of radio stations for my views on the MAFF report. It was my appearance on one of the radio stations which lead on to the next chapter in the story.

Report on Beast slammed

JOHN DOWNS, a specialist in the research of mystery animals, yesterday described as "rubbish" the controversial Government report which could find no evidence of a large beast on Bodmin Moor.

Mr Downs, who is studying reports of similar beasts all over Britain,

GEMINI SOUNDWAVES (G.S).

I have a wonderful ongoing relationship with Gemini Radio in Exeter, and in particular with one of their star D.J.'s, Steve Browning. It was no great surprise when one evening he telephoned me to ask me to appear on his show. I spoke for about fifteen minutes, live on air, on the subject of mystery big cats in the South West and mentioned that what 'we really need is a specimen!'.

Half an hour later someone, identifying himself only by his Christian name, which he asked not to be divulged telephoned the radio station and claimed that three animals, including a pregnant female had been shot. He gave no further details, and as at the time I was elsewhere I knew nothing about it until the next morning.

GETTING SILLY (G.S).

My family keeps very late hours and consequently I am a late riser. I was awoken at about 8.30 AM by a telephone call from Steve Browning. He told me about his mystery caller from the day before and almost immediately put me on air. I appealed for the mystery caller to phone me back. I promised on air that I would respect his confidentiality and that, if he could get me the carcass of one of these cats, there was every chance that we could clear up a large part of the mystery. Later that day I repeated the same appeal for the 'Western Morning News' and on both occasions I took the unprecedented step of publicising my telephone number.

I had two telephone calls. One from an undoubtedly sincere, possibly mad, and somewhat annoying

woman who claimed that the animals were sent by God as a manifestation of His angels, and that by encouraging people to desecrate the corpse of an angel I was committing an unthinkable blasphemy. I thanked her for her advice and a few minutes later I received a call from someone who was obviously so drunk that he had difficulty in stringing words together. He bumbled and swore at me for about a minute and then hung up.

A couple of days later, however, after another appeal on the 'Steve Browning Show', I received another telephone call, and this one appeared, on the surface at least, to be the genuine article.

For many years there have been persistent rumours of a government and military cover up regarding the big cats seen on Exmoor and Bodmin. I have tended to disregard these reports as merely paranoid conspiracy theorising. After all there is no real reason why such a cover up would take place. An introduced population of big cats can hardly compromise national security. This telephone call, for the first time, gives a reason why such a cover up might have taken place.

I am taking a totally neutral position as regards this report. The caller seemed plausible enough, although very paranoid. He also claimed that he had been involved with the scandal that took place when the alleged relationship between the Princess of Wales and Major James Hewitt, became public knowledge. Major Hewitt certainly lives in Devon, but I do wish to treat this whole episode with a healthy degree of scepticism until I receive some more evidence one way or another.

GOVERNMENT SCANDAL (G.S)

My informant claims that when the Royal Marines made their well publicised, and apparently fruitless hunt for the Beast of Exmoor in the mid 1980's, that he was a sergeant in charge of one of the small reconnaissance parties. He also claims that the marines were also searching for the beast in another unspecified location in the South West. He further claims that the search for 'the beast' was not the primary aim of the exercise, but that security implications forbade him to tell me what the Marines were REALLY doing there.

His main claim, however is that three animals WERE shot at unspecified locations, and that at least one was shot on private ground by a party who were not only trespassing but had not been given permission to carry fire arms. He claimed that a relatively junior officer had panicked and that the cover up had been perpetuated further up the chain of command in order to 'save face'.

My personal thoughts are that this is real life not 'the X Files' and that while 'the truth is out there', it is probably far more prosaic. I did, however tell him that I would be very interested to receive a corpse, or even the skull of one of these animals.

GRUESOME SKULL (G.S).

True to form, three days later, after another late night I was woken up by another telephone call. This time it was my good friend and fellow researcher Mrs Joan Amos, a UFOlogist from Tavistock. She told me that a skull had just been found on Bodmin Moor.

It appeared that the original owner of the skull had been a young female big cat, and initial reports were that it was either a leopard or a puma. Although 'Doc' and others had told me that *'there are no such*

things as coincidences', I immediately thought that the whole affair was too good to be true. For the world to believe that only a fortnight after the apparently damning (in reality no such thing), MAFF report, a genuine beast would allow herself to be conveniently decapitated in the vicinity of one of the areas best known beauty spots was asking one to suspend disbelief to a ridiculous extent.

The telephone was red hot (figuratively) for the next three days. I told one close friend that I was sure that the skull had come from a mounted specimen and joked that I wondered which of the interested parties in the North Cornwall area had an old leopard skin rug in their loft!

This was after all the third such skull to be found in the south west. The first one from Dartmoor in 1988 was found by two schoolboys. Earlier in 1995 one of the schoolboys, now grown up, admitted to my wife that whilst the skull had been found where they claimed at Lustleigh, it had been wrapped in a plastic bag. This effectively makes a nonsense of all the wild claims that have been made for this piece of evidence.

The second skull, was probably from a tiger skin rug, and I felt that this one probably had a similar provenance. When Doug Richardson from London Zoo announced that the skull was from a recently dead animal, and still had particles of flesh adhering to it, my conceptions of reality were overturned completely, and I decided to drive into Cornwall myself, and to go and see the doctor.

GETTING SERIOUS: (G.S).

Bodmin itself had a very weird atmosphere.

One of the pubs in the high street had several little huddles of serious looking men all discussing 'the beast'. There was a persistent rumour that the army had been called in to track the animal, and the usual paranoid nonsense about creatures escaping from government genetic research laboratories was being aired. From what the drinkers were saying you would have been prepared to believe that Dr Mengele had just been made the head of "the good ol' Min of Ag and Fish", and that somehow the whole thing was all their fault.

On the way out of Bodmin towards Falmouth we passed two army trucks full of soldiers in full battle dress. They had camouflage make up on their cheeks and carried guns. I don't know what, if anything their presence signifies, and I suspect that they were perfectly innocent 'Territorials' out on an exercise.

The outside wall of a public lavatory in a car park in Bodmin Town Centre had the spray-painted graffiti: "HOW LONG BEFORE A CHILD IS KILLED?", and the graffiti on the bridge which spanned the dual carriageway was even simpler: "MAFF IS MURDER". Feelings were running high.

Two days with 'Doc' restored my sanity. We discussed cabbages and kings, drank some wine, and did a live phone in to Gemini Radio from the public bar of 'The Seven Stars' in Falmouth.

As we were driving home Doug Richardson announced that he was seeking backers for another investigation into the Bodmin creatures. Several magazine and newspaper reports said that he intended to kill the animal. I strongly believe that if there is an animal, its danger to humans is minimal and that its danger to livestock has been greatly exaggerated. For several days some colleagues and I started plans for an expedition of our own.

GUILTY SOLDIER (G.S).

My anonymous informant telephoned back and said that the discovery of the skull was a direct result of my appeal on the radio and in the newspapers. I had appealed for a skull and some acquaintances of his had delivered. When I made the appeal I was expecting to have to collect a gruesome parcel wrapped in a bin bag from the car park of some Cornish country pub. His acquaintances, he said, decided to be more flamboyant about it!

The inference was, **ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SAY THIS**, that the skull was of one of the creatures shot in the mid 1980's. The truth was somewhat different, although I still think that my appeal for a skull had been instrumental in the events which lead to its discovery.

GOOD SCAM? (G.S).

A few days later Doug Richardson announced that he had found the egg cases of a tropical insect inside the cranium and that the apparently fresh flesh was a result of the dried tissue left inside a skull when a corpse is prepared for a skin rug being reconstituted when the skull was soaked in river water.

The matter was over—for the time being. The only person that I felt sorry for was young Barney Lanyon-Jones, the schoolboy who had found it originally. He looked so disappointed that it was obvious that he, at least had not been responsible for the hoax. For hoax it undoubtedly was.

One swallow does not make a summer, and three hoaxes do not disprove a mystery cat. Something is there, and the whole truth is stranger than it might seem. As we approach the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness 'the case' is still very much open and the loplot thickens!

On Collecting a Cryptid

by Grover S. Krantz

There is considerable controversy over whether a specimen should be collected for the purpose of demonstrating its existence. By 'collected', I mean obtaining one of the animals, or substantial parts of it by any means whatever — this might involve live capture or, far more likely, producing a dead body. Some people argue that this is the only rational approach towards that end, while others passionately oppose such killing as unnecessary and destructive. Feelings run high on both sides of this issue, especially in America where the cryptid in question is the Sasquatch (bigfoot). Rather than confining these remarks to just that particular case, it is important to deal with the broader question relating to unknown species in general. What emerges is a clear distinction between various kinds of cryptids — for some of them a specimen would constitute a major step in resolving the problem, while in others this action would accomplish nothing.

When the International Society of Cryptozoology was founded in 1982, the original statement was that our interest was focussed on reported animals of unexpected size or morphology, or occurring in unexpected times or places. Thus we have four logically separable categories to consider. For each of these we might now consider the effects of taking a specimen, and the recovery of at least part of its skeleton. (Animals without skeletons are not dealt with here).

Unexpected Size:

The bones will demonstrate that at least one specimen existed that was an unusually large (or small) specimen of a known type. Whether there are others, and if a new species is warranted, probably cannot be ascertained by that single specimen. (The individual's adult or juvenile status would be easy for a zoologist to ascertain.) Producing the remains of an animal of this category would be of considerable interest, but would not be likely to settle a cryptozoological issue. The pygmy elephant is an example of this kind.

Unexpected Morphology:

The bones will demonstrate that the supposed new species exists in the present time. (In most cases, unusual morphology of a new kind is easily distinguished from individual variation within a known species.) Clear proof of its location might be lacking, but if the bones correspond with the morphology described by local people, there should be little argument. The North American sasquatch is an example of this category.

Unexpected Time:

The Bones will demonstrate that a species known from the fossil record occurs today. The only application of this test is to determine whether a supposedly extinct animal still lives. An obvious example of this category would be a woolly mammoth; a more recent example would be the passenger pigeon. The latter runs the risk of being challenged because the bones might actually have been collected before the supposed extinction. There is often little to distinguish modern bones from those collected 50 years ago.

Unexpected Place:

The bones will demonstrate nothing in this case. Here we are dealing with a known species, specimens of which are available from other places where its existence is unquestioned. The burden of proof is on the collector to show where the specimen was actually taken -- in a disputed case this will be almost impossible. The eastern puma (mountain lion) is an example of this category.

Of these four categories, the second and fourth may now be examined in more detail, first using the American examples. These two categories represent the extremes of usefulness versus futility of collecting a specimen, whilst the others occupy intermediate positions. The sasquatch well illustrates 'unexpected morphology' and the eastern puma well illustrates 'unexpected place'. While only two other examples are mentioned below, the reader can easily fit many more cryptids into this scheme.

Producing the remains of a sasquatch in North America could well prove the existence of that species. The sceptical authorities will accept nothing less than the body, or a significant piece of it, as definitive evidence. Producing that specimen, however, will not conclusively prove that it occurs wild within the

United States and/or Canada. Some critics might argue that it could have been obtained in Siberia or China, for example and brought to America for display. This would not be a serious problem for at least two reasons.

First, simply proving the creature's existence at any location is the biggest point that has been located by the sceptics, and that point would have been won. Second, the mass of reports of creatures closely matching this description in America is so great that few people would seriously dispute the claimed location in general, though the exact spot might be disputed. In addition, the actual circumstances of the acquisition would probably be too impressive to conceal, especially if it is the whole body, and the act of bringing it from a distant location would be equally difficult to conceal.

Producing the remains of a puma, claimed to have been shot in Virginia, would be summarily dismissed by most authorities. The sceptics would immediately say that it had most likely come from some other location where the existence of the puma is not questioned. The burden of proof would be on the collector to show where it was taken. Reports of the eastern puma are not nearly as impressive as those of the sasquatch — there would be little support from local accounts simply because it is not a new animal. The actual circumstances of acquiring such a small animal would not be easily demonstrable, especially if it is just the skull, and the act of bringing it in from a not-so-distant location could have been easily concealed.

In the United Kingdom we have two comparable examples of these same second and fourth categories. The Loch Ness Monster is a case of 'unexpected morphology'; the retrieval of a specimen would almost certainly demonstrate its existence, as well as show just what kind of a creature it is.

Whether such a specimen was actually from Loch Ness is less important than proving the reality of an animal of this type (whatever that might be). Also, the long history of sightings at that location would strongly support the claim of where it was taken. Finally, its presumably large size would make it difficult for anyone to argue that it was brought in from some distant source. Accordingly, it can be argued that efforts should be made to retrieve such a specimen by any and all possible means — perhaps harpooning by (hopefully) unemployed whalers.

The beast of Exmoor is a case of 'unexpected place'; the retrieval of a specimen would not demonstrate the existence of this feline species, simply because that was generally not an issue of disagreement. The history of sightings might support the claim of where it was taken, but not strongly; there are far better accounts of large black cats from elsewhere. Also, parts of black leopards, or melanistic pumas may be small enough to bring into the country without great difficulty. Finally, the possibility exists that such an animal had recently escaped from captivity. Accordingly, it can be argued that no effort should be made to kill or even capture a specimen of this type.

There are many other aspects to the problem of whether and how to collect cryptozoological specimens. Perhaps the readership's reaction to this article will determine if and what I might address in another article.

The author and the editor welcome comments on this article for inclusion in the letters page of a future issue.

CRYPTOCETOLOGY:

Introducing a new branch of Cryptozoology

(Part one of a seven part series in which Darren Naish explores the world of mystery whales)

How mysterious are whales? It depends on how much you know about them! The more you know, the greater the number of enigmatic whales you will learn about. This might be a bit of a strange idea to begin with - animal groups well established in the dogmas of zoology aren't immediate candidates for prominence in the annals of cryptozoology. Sea serpents and almas, (maybe batsquatches and mothmen) come to mind, yes, but whales?

On the 16th September 1994 I opened a book by travelling naturalist Sir Peter Scott ⁽¹⁾. There, on page 254, were his illustrations of a species of dolphin that he saw in the Magellan Straits in 1968. I didn't recognise them as being members of any known species and, after consulting the literature, had to consider the possibility that here was a 'new' species of dolphin, lying undiscovered in a book printed in 1983. This was an exciting concept that really got me enthused, and I began researching in earnest. The find was, as it turned out, somewhat of an ice-berg tip. Within a very short time available literature was revealing a veritable wealth of whale species which had been seen, sometimes even photographed, but were as yet unknown from specimens. Heuvelmans recognised eight species ⁽²⁾ on this basis, but more seemed to be present. The more I looked, the more I found, and what started as a project involving a single illustration in a single book metamorphosed into a number of interrelated topic areas, quite extensive amongst cetology (the study of whales) in their coverage.

Was this news? I think that it would depend on who you asked. Whales are marine, mysterious and elusive; for as long as cetology has been a science, the cetologists have been hinting at what I call 'habitat-induced elusiveness'. Whales are merely proving the bias there is against the discovery of marine forms, for, if you spend a greater proportion of your life beneath the surface of the waves, mankind has not yet gotten much of a chance to get to know you. Of course, not only is this proven by as-yet-undiscovered species, modern species that have remained unknown (or practically so), until very recently endorse it also. Case studies for this are well known and in some cases becoming more so; such as the coelacanth, megamouth, even certain whale species themselves ⁽³⁾. Good old-fashioned elusive species proving more diversity amongst living forms than we'd anticipated, aren't, however, the entire story. These fascinating animals will be covered in article four, whereas Scott's mystery Dolphin will be covered in article two. This topic is large enough to be considered as a subject in its own right. I have coined the name CRYPTOCETOLOGY, merging the study of whales with the principles that we have learned (or 'have yet to learn') from cryptozoology. This first article is mainly a primer to familiarise you with names and ideas which will be introduced in successive articles. To begin with, therefore, a basic introduction to the diversity amongst whales, and the evolution which has lead to this diversity is in order. I hope that you find it as interesting as I do.

The Evolution of Whales and the cryptocetological aspects therein.

The great whales and their smaller cousins form a mammalian group that we call the Cetacia, or, in common parlance just Whales. Awe inspiring, beautiful, colourful and often damn weird, these amazing creatures have adapted themselves to a realm so different from our own that they function in ways that we are still struggling to understand. Whales are a diverse group of animals and, when we consider the extinct

species as well as the living ones become even more so.

The present opinion is that the Cetacea are monophyletic, which means that they all share the same single ancestor. (There have been dissensions ^{(4) (5)}). This single ancestor, one of the mesonychids ⁽⁶⁾, (omnivorous wolf-like ungulates), was an amphibious, fish eating mammal that took to an aquatic lifestyle during the early Eocene, about 50 Million years ago. On acquiring characters that we now use to define 'whale' ⁽⁷⁾, these animals therefore became the first whales. They are called protocetids and, while very different from the fully aquatic whales that would be their eventual descendants, did enjoy success in the seas and estuaries of the world. A protocetid, as the recently discovered *Ambulocetus natans* ⁽⁷⁾, has shown, would have looked something like a long snouted sea-lion (*figure one*). While protocetids were ancestral to later whales, they may well have been a more explicit cryptozoological link! (I will keep you in suspense until article three). (There are I have to say, other theories on the origin of whales, some of which directly challenge the evidence presented here. These will be discussed in a future article).

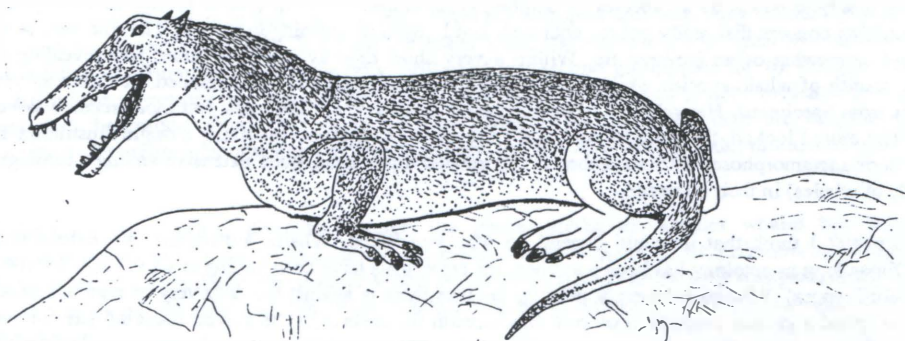


Fig. 1. *Ambulocetus natans*, a 49 million year old protocetid whale from the Upper Kuldana formation in Pakistan. Note the presence of fur and the absence of tail flukes.

On becoming more specialised, and generally better adapted to a marine existence, *protocetids* became *basilosaurids*. These whales are best known for *Basiliosaurus*, a 20 metre-or-more long form from the late Eocene. It and its relatives, long known as *zeuglodons* also turn out to have more than their fair share of cryptozoological importance and thus also get fuller discussion in article three. Both *protocetids* and *zeuglodons* (and a few other poorly known Eocene families) are lumped together as 'archaeocetes' - basically whales that lack the specialisations used to identify the two later whale groups whose respective histories begin in the Oligocene (see fig 2).

The Rise of Modern Whales.

All post-archaeocete whales are separated into those with teeth - the *Odontoceti* - and those with baleen (whalebone) instead of teeth - *Mysticeti*. Both groups arose from within the *Archaeoceti*, independently, some have maintained ^{(8), (9), (10)}, but there is now at least some molecular evidence suggesting that

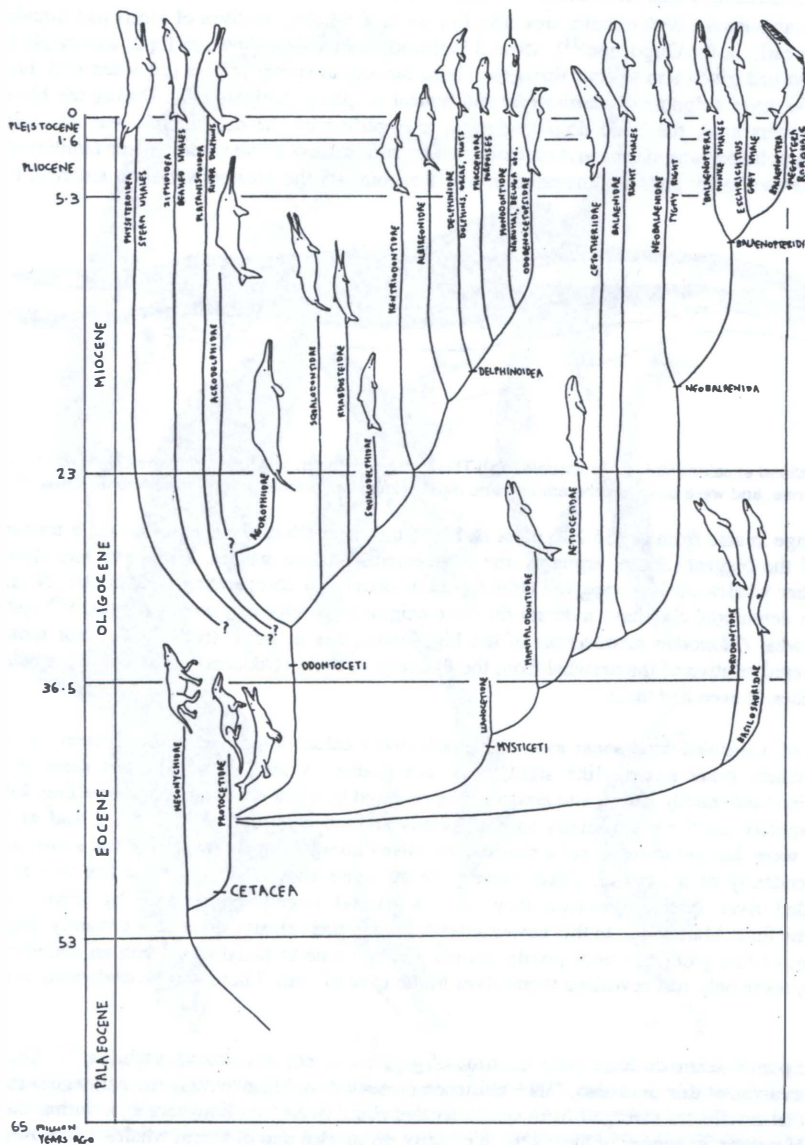


Figure 2. A phylogeny of cetaceans based on currently recognised ideas. Based mostly on Folkens and Barnes⁽¹²⁾ with additional material from⁽¹⁹⁾ and⁽¹⁴⁾. The Ilanocetids are too poorly known for a restoration, the two figures for the Protocetidae represent the morphological variation known in that family. No figures are to scale.

mysticetes share an ancestor with odontocetes. The first toothed whales, relatives of forms like *Squalodon* (fig 3), appeared early in the Oligocene⁽¹¹⁾, about 37 million years ago as shown in fig 2, and by about 30 million years ago had given rise to four lineages. Those leading to sperm whales (*physeteroids*), beaked whales (*ziphoids*), river dolphins (*platanistoids*) and typical dolphins, (*delphinoids*). During the Miocene (23-5.3 million years ago), the basic dolphin design, exemplified by the *delphinoids*, was successfully adapted to life in polar regions, rivers, and both deep water and shallow marine areas. Three families of the *Delphinoidea* survive today and, as illustrated in fig. 4 encompass the greatest variation amongst living whales.

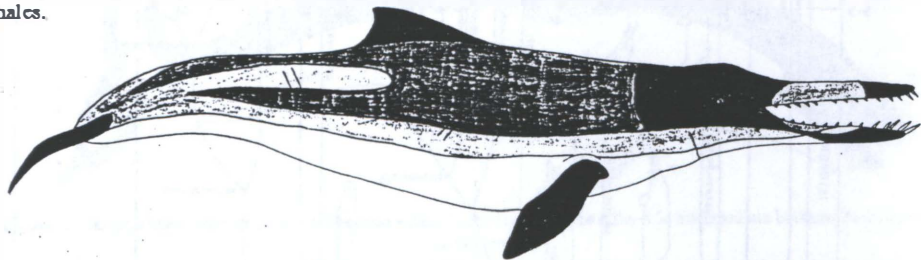


Fig 3. A generalised squalodontid (c.f *Prosqualodon*). This family was most abundant from the Oligocene to early Miocene times, and were amongst the earliest and most primitive of odontocete whales. After Folkens⁽¹²⁾.

Delphinoids range in size from the 36 kilo mass and 1.35 metre length of the smallest to the 8 tonnes and 9.75 metres of the biggest. Some, arguably the most exciting of all whales, are active and ferocious predators of other whales. At least one, the Orca (*Orcinus orca*), is a co-operating pack hunter. Nearly all members of the delphinoid clan have a dorsal fin - one enigmatic species may even have two⁽¹⁵⁾ and one, the fabled Narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*) of the high arctic, has a 'horn' (really an incisor tooth). A recently discovered relative of the narwhal from the Pliocene of Peru, (*Odobenocetops*)⁽¹³⁾, was a cetacean mimic of walrus. It even had tusks.

The evolution of a sophisticated sonar system has allowed whales, delphinoids among them to exploit environments where other senses, like sight, were not usable. A number of lineages seem to have independently invaded muddy rivers, and are today represented by eight species of river dwelling dolphin. Five of these species are the superficially similar, poorly sighted *platanistoids* (see figs 2 and 4). For a long time they were thought to represent a single, specialised lineage, but it now seems that some, at least evolved independently of the others. Their marine ancestors are known from early in the Miocene and possibly invaded river systems because they were a habitat largely unexploited by large, aquatic vertebrates at the time. Mainly due to this newer habitat, though their elusive behaviour certainly helps, the living examples of this group are very poorly known and continue to tantalise us with an abundance of mystery forms, some only just revealing themselves to the eyes of man. These will be dealt with in article five.

The Oligocene period seems to have been the time of greatest divergence amongst whales⁽¹¹⁾. The other extant groups evolved at this time also. DNA evidence presented by Milinkovitch and colleagues in 1993⁽¹⁷⁾ suggested that mysticetes diverged from sperm whales about twelve million years ago, during the mid-late Miocene. However, a number of fossils, both of early mysticetes and of sperm whales are known from the early Oligocene (35 million years ago)⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹⁸⁾, casting doubt upon this hypothesis. A new and more thorough genetic analysis published in 1994 demonstrated that not only are mysticetes monophyletic, they are far removed from sperm whales who seem to have evolved from other odontocetes early on in odontocete history.⁽¹⁴⁾ (see fig 2). Though they have now been effectively challenged Milinkovitch and

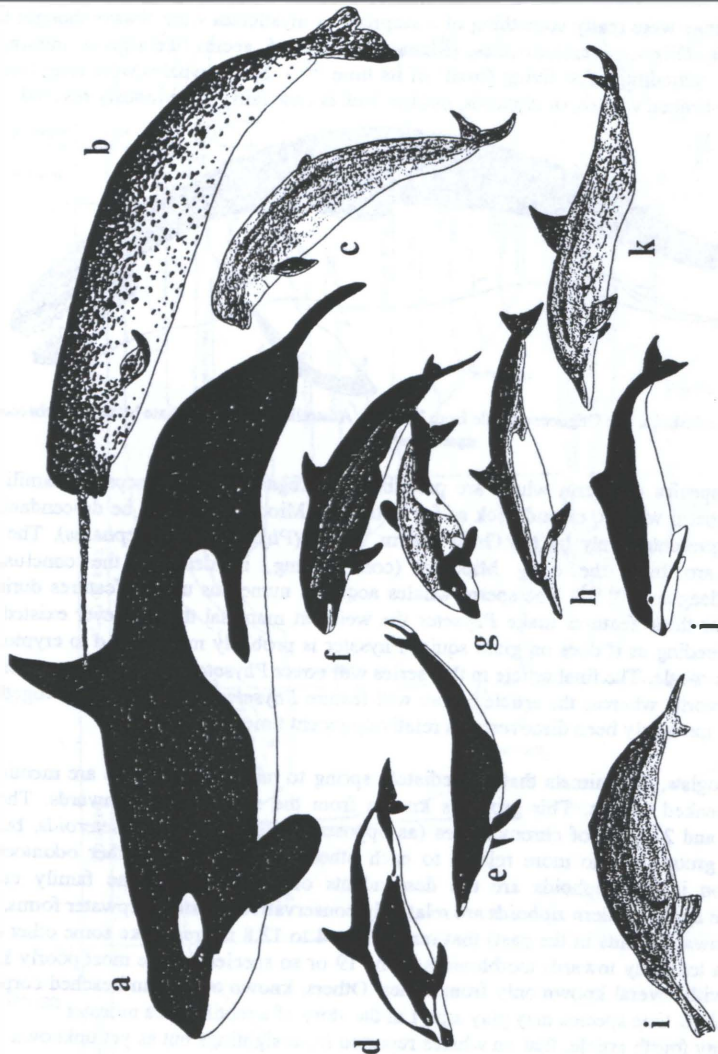


Figure 4. Some of the diversity amongst the delphinoid superfamily with one representative *platanistoid* (river dolphin). a) Orca, a 'globocephalid'. b) Narwhal, representing one subfamily of the *Monodontidae*; c) Snubfin (*Orcaella brevirostris*), probably a monodontid also; d) Hourglass Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus cruciger*); e) Northern Rightwhale Dolphin (*Lissodelphis borealis*); f) Pygmy orca (*Feresa attenuata*), another 'globocephalid'; g) New Zealand Dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*); h) Spinner (*Stenella longirostris*); i) Ganges dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*), a *platanistid* river dolphin; j) Spectacled Porpoise (*Australophocaena dioptrica*) of *Phocoenidae*; k) Rough-tooth (*Steno bredanensis*). Common names adapted from (16).

colleagues' DNA findings were really something of a surprise, as mysticetes were always thought to have been derived from early Oligocene archaeocetes. (*Mammalodon*, fig 5, seems like a good 'missing link', though it was actually something of a 'living fossil' of its time⁽¹⁹⁾). Sperm whales were long thought to have been allied to the beaked whales, or ziphoids, but this link is now fairly unanimously severed.

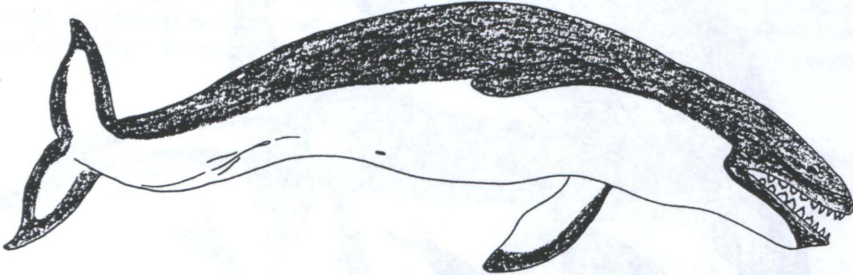


Figure 5. *Mammalodon colliveri*, a late Oligocene whale from Victoria, Australia. It is intermediate between archaeocetes and mysticetes⁽²⁰⁾.

The three (known!) species of sperm whale are probably best regarded as two separate families (21). *Kogiids*, the pygmy sperm whales, extend back as far as the late Miocene and may be descendants of the *physeterids*, today represented only by the Great Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). The earliest known *physeterids* are from the early Miocene (contradicting, incidentally, the conclusions of Milinkovitch and colleagues)⁽¹⁴⁾ (18). The sperm whales acquired numerous unique features during their evolution and together these features make *Physeter* the weirdest mammal that has ever existed (in my opinion of course). Feeding as it does on giant squid, *Physeter* is probably more linked to cryptozoology than any other known whale. The final article in this series will cover *Physeter* and all of the associations it has with the cryptic world, whereas the article before will feature *Physeter*'s pygmy cousins together with the other species that have only been discovered in relatively recent times.

To many cryptozoologists, the animals that immediately spring to mind when whales are mentioned are the *ziphoids* - the beaked whales. This group is known from the mid Miocene onwards. They share asymmetrical skulls and 21 pairs of chromosomes (as opposed to 22) with the *physeteroids*, but it now seems that the two groups are no more related to each other than they are to other *odontocetes*. An alternative suggestion is that *ziphoids* are the descendants of an early Miocene family called the *Squalodelphidae* (see fig.2). Modern *ziphoids* are relatively conservative, mostly deepwater forms, (though they did evolve freshwater forms in the past) that range from 4 to 12.8 metres - like some other cetacean groups they have a tendency towards toothlessness. The 19 or so species are the most poorly known of all large mammals with several known only from bones. Others, known only from beached corpses, also have yet to be seen alive. One species may play a part in the story of a reptilian sea monster⁽²²⁾ (23), and still others form part of my fourth article, that on whales reported from sightings but as yet unknown from any specimens.

Diversification of the Mysticetes.

Mysticetes, the baleen whales, were extremely successful in the Oligocene, Miocene and lower Pliocene, and although today represented by four families (some say three), are less successful in terms of species numbers than they were. Small *mysticetes*, called *cetotheres*, comprised at least sixty species of moderate

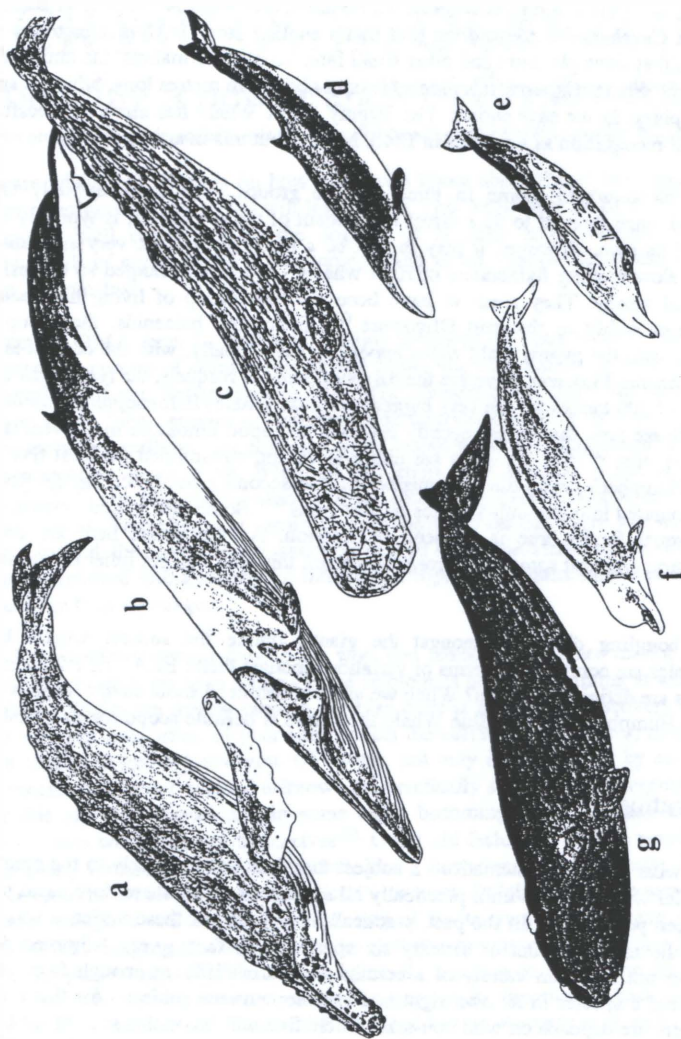


Figure 6. Some of the variation amongst the bigger whales, representing five of their seven families; a) Humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and b) Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) - representing both traditional rorqual subfamilies; c) Great sperm whale - sole living member of *physeteridae*; d) Pygmy right whale - only living *neobalaenid*; e) Skew beaked whale (*Mesoplodon hectori*) and f) Northern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*), both of *Ziphiidae*, finally; g) Right whale (*Balaena glacialis*) represents *Balaenidae*. Common names adapted from ⁽¹⁶⁾.

sized whales ⁽²⁴⁾ during this time of greatest success. Those that lived in the Pliocene were eaten by the 13 metre long giant shark *Carcharodon megalodon* (but that's another story!). *Mysticetes* today are mostly enormous filter feeders that sieve plankton and other small fare. To confuse matters, the unusual, and very mysterious Pygmy Right Whale (*Caperea marginata*) is only about five metres long, which is smaller than the biggest of the delphinoids we saw earlier. The Pygmy Right Whale has almost successfully eluded science since its official recognition as a species in 1846. More about this in article six.

Pygmy right aside, balcen whales come in three definite groups. The strangely ugly Grey whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*), once thought to be a direct descendant of the cetotheres, is typically regarded as occupying a family of its own. However, it may in fact be a recently evolved, very specialised rorqual (read on). The bulky, slow moving *balacnidae* or right whales - the whales hunted so extensively in the past - form the second family. They seem to have been the first group of living mysticetes to have appeared, and did so probably in the mid Oligocene ⁽¹¹⁾. Following *balacnids*, the group I call the *Neobalacnida* evolved, with the pygmy right whales appearing first. Finally, with the earliest known fossil species coming from the mid Miocene, there are the *balacnopterids* or rorquals, the real giants with lengths up to 31m and masses of 200 tonnes for the very biggest-the Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), biggest animal of all time. (Please note that some recently revealed sauropod dinosaurs may eventually win the 'largest vertebrate ever' title ^{(25) (26)}). Rorquals are either sleek and streamlined (at least five species) or stout and bulky (the Humpback being the only member of that second group). (See fig. 6). Rorquals have traditionally been segregated into two sub-families on that basis ⁽²⁴⁾. Some new genetic evidence, however suggests that the rorqual family tree is in need of revision. As the issues here are coupled with interpretation of variation amongst some of the rorqual species, this area will get fuller discussion in article five.

There isn't exactly boggling diversity amongst the giants, unlike the smaller whales but perhaps surprisingly these whales are confusing in terms of variation amongst them: EXACTLY how many species are there? Which ones are definitely species? When we are that confused about such conspicuous and well known species as the Humpback and the Blue Whale then there is definite scope for an investigation into 'hidden' forms.

Cetacean systematics.

This brings me onto what is called systematics - a subject that does not just apply to the great mysticetes but to all of the smaller whales too. Within practically all species of whale there does seem to be at least some variation between populations. In the past, practically every one of these varieties was named as a separate species, so the modern count of seventy six species is in fact a very 'slimmed down' up to date count. Whether or not a certain variety of a certain species is different enough from others of the species to be considered a species in its own right is a very contentious subject - for that reason exactly how many species there are depends on who you ask. Article five will be on this subject - it has a bearing on cryptozoology because there may be 'new' species out there currently unrecognised, maybe thought of as part of as part of another species due to lack of significant research and the right comparisons. The confusion that this issue and the others like it cause when we begin to look at whales in detail is considerable.

Hopefully, you may get to understand this in my next article; "The Page 254 Story".

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STRANGENESS IN SCOTLAND

By Mark Fraser

(Excerpts edited from a much longer letter)

... During 1994 myself and family experienced numerous odd incidents while living in different parts of Scotland, including unusual animal sightings in the Highlands, strange, rather dangerous behaviours of cows, a UFO sighting, Poltergeist activity in the cottage where we lived, and a strange animal in Glenshee, (which after reading the article by C.H.Keeling (A&M6), on the Nandi Bear reminded me of that particular night). We also saw a phantom wolf of which we were to hear tales from local residents later.

Since then I have become fascinated by the reports of strange/alien animals and have written to many letters pages in Scottish newspapers asking people for their accounts concerning unusual sightings etc. The majority are of hauntings or one-off sightings of ghosts. I have received two sightings of 'big cats'. One from the 1970's and the other which occurred in late 1993 in the grounds of Dean Castle in Kilmarnock, not half a mile from my house. Also the reports of a Bigfoot type creature in Aberdeenshire, Falkirk, and Dundonald in Ayrshire. Unfortunately the majority of witnesses wish to remain anonymous. I will respect these wishes. It is now my aim and intention to gather and collect as many alien animal sightings from Scotland as I can. I find the subject very interesting.

I would like to tell you of my two sightings. My wife was present on both occasions, although she never saw the wolf. I must admit, I question my sanity sometimes.

While driving along the B9014 through the village of Drummair in Banffshire, heading in the direction of Duftown, I saw what at first I thought was a large dog jumping onto the boot of a car which was parked on the road outside the last house in the village when you are heading towards Duftown. Then, as we approached alongside I was positive that what I was looking at was a wolf. As I watched, it disappeared in front of my very eyes.

My wife did not see it at all and it was some time later when we reached Duftown that I told her of what I had seen. The 'wolf' had large red eyes...I am sure that I heard its howls once, a few days afterwards. Opposite the cottage that we then lived in sits Rosarie Forest, along the A9 between the town of Keith and the village of Mulben, Banffshire. I decided to do a little exploring inside the forest and as I put my first foot inside onto the soft, mossy grass I heard the most terrible blood curdling howls, (two in all). I left that forest with every goose pimple and every hair on my body standing to attention. I thought that my heart would explode with the rapidity of its beating. I do not know why the howling instilled so much terror in me, but they did, although they could have been just the howls of a dog. I have never once set foot in that forest again except for firewood and then I have been accompanied. I often looked out of our cottage windows at the deep, dark, large, forest which was no more than two bus lengths away from our door, and I often wished that it would go away, but it was in fact us, that was to move, for various reasons, after only three months in the cottage.

It was not until several weeks later, when talking to a couple of new friends in Keith that we learned that the area is supposedly haunted by a phantom wolf. No mention of my experience was made by me before hand and their information was offered voluntarily. The wolf has been blamed for several dead and mutilated cattle in the area, and I am told, that amongst locals the wolf's existence is well known Anyone

who can get them to make a statement and then not retract it later deserves a bloody medal!

The second time that I saw a strange 'something on legs' was while driving, again with my wife, through the glorious scenery of Glenshee along the A93. It was midnight and we never saw much of the scenery around us. (This was around August 1994 and was approximately three weeks after I saw the 'wolf'). The sight of a fully antlered stag standing in the headlights is not something to be forgotten or the herds of deer running away from the roadside as you approach in the car is a wonderful sight. At what point along the A93 I do not know. I only



"The Spot in Drummuir where I saw the wolf"

Pic. Copyright Mark Fraser.

know that there were a lot of German campers around in their motor homes. Apart from the deer and the rabbits these were the only signs of life around. While driving, and I remember that it was whilst we were driving south, and uphill, something strange ran out from the left hand side of the road and disappeared into the blackness on our right.

It first put me in mind of a cross between a kangaroo and a hyena. Its hind legs were larger than its front ones as it ran by on all four legs. Like the 'wolf' in Drummuir it had red, glowing eyes. I know that it sounds silly, but I got the feeling that it was laughing at us as it crossed our path and turned to look at us as it disappeared amongst the heather and the blackness of the night. Maybe that's why I thought that it was hyena like.

I will say, that the drawing in A&M6 of the 'Nandi Bear' put me in mind of someone who had seen the same thing that my wife and I encountered amidst the wilds of Glenshee. Although its hind legs were higher the animal stood no more than two or two and a half feet in height and maybe three feet in length. Remember, however, it was night time, and very dark and my estimation of lengths is not so hot at the best of times! The rest of the journey to my home town of Hull in Yorkshire was uneventful.

As mentioned, 1994 was a strange year for us. It is certainly a year that we don't want to experience again. Why it was so we really do not have any idea. It seems to have taken six or seven months to get over it, after bad luck and maybe depression on both our parts which we attribute still to the cottage and the whole area in which we stayed. It was a strange oppressing place although the beauty in some areas is breathtaking. We do hope that it is an end to it all.

Editors Note:

This sighting of a Zooform Phenomenon which appears on the face of it to be a cryptid known only from some far distant land is not unique:

At 3.30 AM on the 7th April 1974 Joan Gilbert saw a strange creature at Branksome in Dorset. I have never been sure whether this sighting should be filed with the 'mystery cats', 'mystery dogs', or even, conceivably 'mystery kangaroos', because the beast Joan Gilbert saw, she identified as a Thylacine. The Thylacine, as every cryptozoologist knows, in historic times at least, has only been known from the Australian island of Tasmania, where apart from the fact that it occupies pride of place on the Tasmanian coat of arms, it has been presumed to have been extinct since the 1930's. Her description was uncanny:

"It had stripes, a long thin tail, and seemed to be all grey, though it might have had some yellow on it. It was thin and definitely not a fox". She later identified the animal as a Thylacine from a picture in an illustrated book!

(*'Alien Animals'* by J & C Bord 1980).

The implications of these sightings are enormous, but as a true forscan I try not to draw conclusions (especially when I can't think of any) and so for the moment at least, the matter rests.

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by Dr Karl P.N.Shuker and Stephen Shipp

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BIRD BRAINED

Life is strange. The famous astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle declared the old bird Archaeopteryx to be a manufactured hoax designed to fit the theory of evolution a few years ago. He based his argumentation on the fossil's surface structure, not satisfied with the feathers. If we shuffle the letters in Archaeopteryx a bit we get a sentence:

"Try a crepe hoax" or "Creepy hoax art". Another possibility is "Try a hoax, creep!"

Greetings

Eric Sorensen, Copenhagen.

Dear Jonathan,

My main reason for writing is to comment on "Gavin's" account of an encounter with the Cornish Owlman. He did mention our identification of this creature as an owl, as suggested in our book 'Modern Mysteries of Britain', but only in passing, and I would like to expand on it if I may. I have been interested in the owlman ever since he was first reported in the 1970's, and I have been to the woods where he was seen in the company of Doc Shiels who was instrumental in publicising the sightings. I was uncertain what to make of the reports for some time, but tended like most people, to accept them as genuine, in view of all the other activity in the Falmouth bay area at the time (Morgawr and UFO sightings). More recently, however, now that some doubt has been cast on certain of the Falmouth events (see Mark Chorvinsky's painstaking research as published in his 'Strange' magazine), I am much more inclined to believe that the sightings have a much more prosaic explanation. It was my own sighting in Hafren Forest (Powys), a few years ago which clarified my thinking on Owlman, as here described in 'Modern Mysteries of Britain':

"I was sitting in a car when my attention was caught by a disturbance in the trees across a stream. I saw a large bird, definitely an owl, rise up vertically, facing me with its whole face and body visible, its legs and feet hanging down. It rose straight up above the trees and flapped off, in broad daylight".

This very closely resembles what the witnesses of Owlman have described - indeed the very name 'Owlman' suggests that the creature was owl-like. The creature's size is the problem - 'Gavin' says that it was "definitely a great deal bigger than any owl". But I suspect that anyone taken by surprise when an owl rises up close by them, would think the creature bigger than it really was, and with its legs and feet hanging down, and wings lifted, these would add to its apparent size and bulk. There's no doubt that owls are frightening to encounter in an eerie wood at night, and they do tend to be alarmed and fly off if people approach them. So despite "Gavin's" protestation that the creature was definitely not an owl, I have my suspicions that that's exactly what it was.

Keep up the good work,
Best wishes,

Janet Bord,
The Fortean Picture Library,
Clwyd.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TO WIT TO WOO

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THESE LETTERS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE MAGAZINE OR OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTLEAN ZOOLOGY. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR INCLUSION.

THE BEAR FACTS

I'd like to comment on C.H.Keeling's article about the Nandi Bear in A&M6. He explicitly implies that chalicotheres were carnivorous. This is totally incorrect. Chalicotheres were certainly herbivores, like their closest relatives the brontotheres and horses. There does remain some argument about how they used their strong fore limbs and hooked claws. Did they dig up roots and tubers for a living, or were they semi-bipedal browsers that pulled branches down towards their mouths? The massiveness of the hips, arguing that a semi-bipedal stance was behaviourally important, endorse the latter interpretation. Like the living horses, rhinos and tapirs, chalicotheres were caecal fermenters.

De Sarre in 'The Mysterious Hominoids of Africa' (A&M6) refers to '*Australopithecus ramidus*. It is now known that *ramidus* lacked derived characteristics of *Australopithecus* and thus deserves its own genus. Thus it is now *Aldipithecus ramidus*.

All the best 'till next time.

Darren Naish,
Southampton.

NEPALESE HUMPED ELEPHANTS

As a cryptozoologist since the early 1950's (before a lot of the present day crop were born, or even thought of), I am anxious that the whole field of investigation should be taken seriously. However, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link - and those amongst us that we could well do without are those who compulsively grab at straws, no matter how short and flimsy, in their apparently insatiable desire to create new species or resurrect extremely old ones. Scanty or fragmentary evidence - as often as not just in the eye of the beholder - is all too often the 'basis' of much heralded investigation that turns out to be the pursuit of wild examples of *Anser anser* - which does cryptozoology no good at all. A superb example of this is the attempt to see two perfectly ordinary bull Asiatic Elephants (*Elephas maximus*) as specimens of the extinct *Stegodon*. (A&M6 pp.11-12).

The two, admittedly, not particularly clear, photographs show typical large bulls of the forma typica without a vestige of evidence to suggest that they are anything else. The 'domes' on the forehead are so characteristic that in Indian folklore they are known as 'domes of wisdom', while the 'bridge' that gives the area of the front of the head a decidedly convex appearance, is again, the norm: this was very marked on a large bull exhibited for many years in the Leningrad Zoological Gardens, and I observed a similar excrescence on another animal in the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, in the 1960's. It would appear to be a natural sign of ageing, common in bulls and sometimes in cows.

The size of Raja Gaj and Kuncha is nothing to get excited about either, as although Nepal is just about the northernmost limit of the range of the Asiatic Elephant it does seem to grow to a particularly large size there. Just look at the mounted, (unfortunately tuskless) specimen in the British Museum (Natural History). in South Kensington: this is, or was Jung Pershad who lived at the London Zoological Garden from 1876 until 1897 - and came from that part of the world.

Hares of this nature, no matter how excitedly and enthusiastically they may be put up, have no place in serious cryptozoology - in fact I'm reminded of something that an old Peakland farmer once said to me, getting on for half a century ago: *"Tha secs, lad, most folk see what they want to see..."*

Well....?

Clinton Keeling.
Guildford.

ON THE BONNIE BONNIE BANKS....

Dear Sir,

With reference to Nick Morgan's letter (A&M5) in which he states that Loch Lomond "has not sustained any tradition of monster sightings". I wonder if he is aware of some fairly recent claims of sightings and one from the early eighteenth century.

1. Alexander Graham, writing in 1724 stated that where the river of Enrick falls into the Loch, that locals sometimes see the 'Hippopotam or Waterhorse' (Holiday 1968; Costello 1974).
2. On the 22nd of September 1964, a married couple observed a long humped back moving up the Loch. (Dinsdale 1966; Costello 1974).
3. Summer 1964, Sandy Watt and Bob Wilson from their train on a stretch of track above the Loch observed a huge object bigger than a long boat and moving fast 'like a torpedo' across the water. (Dinsdale 1966; Costello 1974).
4. Easter 1980, at around 8.00 a.m. The Maltmans and their daughter from approximately two hundred yards observed a patch of water which seemed to boil. A head appeared and a long neck approximately five feet long and behind this a long curved shape. They viewed this for around thirty seconds before they fled from the scene. (Nessletter 112).

I have visited Loch Lomond on a number of occasions, and I would have thought that if there is a resident population of unknown animals in there that there would have been far more sightings, especially considering the amount of leisure pursuits and sporting activity on the Loch. (Perhaps this activity has made the animals even more elusive, or driven them to recent extinction?)

These sighting reports remain and do seem to have been made by reliable witnesses. Perhaps the solution is abnormal sized individuals of known animals of the Loch. Eels for example?

I would be interested to hear other readers views.

Yours faithfully,

M.Playfair.
Leicestershire.

Book Reviews.

On the Track of Unknown Animals by Bernard Heuvelmans (Kegan Paul £25.00 676pp)

Forty years ago this book first propounded the theory and methodology of Cryptozoology. Above all else it is this book which earned Heuvelmans the well deserved title of 'The Father of Cryptozoology'. It has been out of print for many years but at last it is now available again.

This is a book that should be on the shelves of every cryptozoologist, whatever their degree of involvement, and is as enjoyable a read for me now as it was when I first read it twenty years ago.

It covers many of the main icons of terrestrial cryptozoology like the yeti and the orang pendek, but also covers such half forgotten cryptids as the agogwe and the spotted lion. There are notable omissions, such as Bigfoot, the yeren and the thylacine, but it has to be remembered that this book was first written over forty years ago, when the political, and even the geographical map of the world was far different to how it is today.

This is a reprint and not a new edition. There is a new introduction and many new illustrations, but the text remains the same as the first UK edition published by Rupert Hart Davis in 1958. It is still, however an essential part of your library, and if you have not already done so, I strongly urge you to buy it.

In Search of Prehistoric Survivors by Dr Karl P.N.Shuker (Blandford 192pp £17.99)

This is quite simply the most important Cryptozoological book to have been published in English since the above book first saw the light forty years ago. It is nothing less than a detailed description of dozens of possible, and probable, 'prehistoric survivors', which may still exist in the less well trodden parts of the globe.

Books on general cryptoinvestigative theory (as opposed to books about a specific cryptid or group of cryptids), tend to fall into one of two categories. One group drifts towards other areas of forscan investigation by including zooform phenomena and other less tangible occurrences within the scope of their studies. These, whilst within the remit of this magazine, are not the subject of cryptozoology, and have no place in a work of this kind.

The other main type of cryptozoology book sticks to strict zoological criteria, but indulges, self-indulgently in wishful thinking and presents a series of flimsy argument to suggest that hardly any creature actually becomes extinct.

Thankfully, like Heuvelmans before him, Karl Shuker has avoided either path, and has produced a logical, meticulously researched, but massively entertaining book on general cryptozoology which should act as a benchmark for the next forty years.

Dragons - a Natural History by Dr Karl P.N.Shuker. (Aurum £12.95).

We always knew that Karl Shuker was a meticulous and erudite scholar. This book proves that he is a superbly entertaining story teller. This book is a must for those with an interest in all things draconian. Shuker writes in a witty and entertaining style, which I have a sneaking suspicion will lead him to becoming the first cryptozoologist presenter of 'Jackanory'. I haven't even mentioned the lavish and quite stunning illustrations which make this probably the most attractive book on any fortaean subject I have seen in a long time. (I, however know which 'Whitesnake' LP Dr Karl had in mind when he suggested the layout for the section about the Lindorm).

It covers a wide range of dragon stories and folklore from across the world but also has a smattering of cryptozoological theorising to provide possible explanations for some of them.

This is the perfect Christmas gift for anyone with even the most vague interest in zoomythology of any description. If Shuker carries on at this rate, with two such excellent books which will, after all appeal to such diverse audiences then he will put the rest of us who write about such things out of business.

In common with much of the rest of the cryptozoological world, we at 'Animals & Men' are fascinated to know what he is going to write next!

Reading the Vampire by Ken Gelder (Routledge pb 160pp)

An excellent addition to the vampirologists library. This erudite little book examines the cultural and literary perspectives of vampirism, from a sober, unsensational, but entertaining viewpoint. It examines vampirism as an adjunct to pan european anti semitism and deep rooted homophobia, as well as in terms of a deep rooted mistrust of Romanians across much of Magyar Europe.

Although, unlike much of my library on the subject, it avoids discussing 'real' vampirism, and ignores contemporary accounts in favour of learned literary and socio-political analysis this is a fine book and one which I have no hesitation in recommending.

It should however be read in conjunction with Underwood or Summers (but maybe not Sean Manchester) in order to provide a holistic overview of the subject.

(P.S For those of you who may wonder, I think that Sean Manchester and David Farrant's books are both highly entertaining and well written, but are too irrevocably entangled with the cult of the personality to be more than a highly personal insight into one specific outbreak of vampirism).

All the books reviewed this issue are available at a discount
from The Crypto Shop.

Crypto rock is a rare and wondrous creation in its own right sharing with the elusive creatures that we all seek those attributes of fascination oh hell, let's cut the pretentious drivel. On more cut from the mighty album we all know as

"Now That's what I Call Crypto!"

by Neil Nixon

Richard Scott with Rex Crasswell: 'Slug Talk'.

The crypto world includes animals of rare and mutated forms as much as rare animals per se. Hell, of course it does, and for what its worth I think that Gef the Talking Mongoose got a seriously severe press, he certainly had me convinced. Anyway, animals don't come any more mutated than on this seminal slice of sonorial weirdness. The album itself is an elongated trawl through sounds and textures of varied forms that occasionally touches upon some recognisable musical form. One of the more left-field excursions is the opening track 'Slug Talk'. By my reckoning these slugs have been tunneling right under the pile at Sellafield and imbibing the trickling radio-active juices to such an extent that they've mutated into something from a splatterpunk horror novel. Either that or Scott and Casswell are a couple of pale skinned techno fiends who won't even know that there was a heatwave in 1995 because they were too busy playing with their keyboards, samplers and tape equipment.

Whatever, we have here less than two minutes of gurgling, slurping, droning and humming that takes a sharp turn into sampled electronic piano around half way through. These are slugs with something to say about their subterranean sojourns and a curious reflective quality to their thinking given their relatively low position in the ranking of animal intelligence. If you want to hear the bizarre slug sounds I'd suggest going to Sellafield and tunneling under the pile yourself. You've probably got more chance of meeting a slug down there than you have a chance of turning up a copy of the CD 'The Magnificence of Stereo' which contains this track. For the record (heh heh geddit?), the album came out in 1992 on the Sruti Box label, and rejoices in the catalogue number CD 01. I use the term 'catalogue number' a bit loosely here since this album doesn't appear in official lists of the record industry like the 'Music Master' CD catalogue. Your best bet, if you're that bothered, would be trying the small ads in the more out to lunch music mags. And if you are 'that bothered' then you'll already know which mags I mean!

Material printed in this magazine, (and there is no significance to this notice appearing on this page-it merely happened to be the only spare space in the magazine), is the opinion of the author and not necessarily that of the editorial team, or of The Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every effort has been made to ensure that no copyright restrictions have been infringed and that no defamatory statements are published within these pages.

PERIODICAL REVIEWS

We welcome an exchange of periodicals with magazines of mutual interest although because we now exchange with so many magazines we have been forced, much against our fortune methodology, to categorise them.

CRYPTOZOOLOGY AND ZOOMYTHOLOGY

DRAGONCHRONICLE, The dragon trust, PO Box 3369, London SW6 6JN. A fascinating collection of all things draconian which now appears four times a year. Now A4 and Glossy..how do they DO it?

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CRYPTOZOOLOGY CLUB NEWSLETTER, 3773 West 18th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. V6S 1B3. Excellent and well put together, and they are now on the Internet as well!

CREATURE RESEARCH JOURNAL, Paul Johnson, 721 Old Greensburg Pike, North Versailles, PA 15137-1111 USA. A fascinating periodical about the correlation between mystery animals and UFO reports.

CRYPTOZOOLOGIA, Association Belge d'Etude et de Protection des Animaux Rares, Square des Laines 49/4, 1050 Bruxelles. Belgium. A French language magazine published by the Belgian society for Cryptozoology.

FRINGE SCIENCE

NEXUS 55 Queens Rd, E. Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1BG. Intelligent look at the fringes of science. Well put together. Very impressive.

FORTEAN

TEMS NEWS, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2QY. An entertaining collection of odds and sods and generally weird stuff. A magazine I always enjoy reading. Recommended.

DEAD OF NIGHT, 156 Bolton Road East, Newferry, Wirral, Merseyside, L62 4RY. An amusing and intelligently put together Fortean magazine. The latest issue includes the trippiest peice on the occult aspects of Loch Ness that I have read in a long time.

ENIGMAS, 41 The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, FK10 2TT A Fine 'mysteries' magazine with a UFO bias. An article by me on animal mutilation will be appearing eventually!

THIRD STONE PO BOX 258, Cheltenham, Glocs, GL53 0HR. The magazine of the Gloucester Earth Mysteries group. A wonderful, witty and stylish look at earth mysteries in general and Gloucestershire ones in particular.

EARTHLY DELIGHTS, PO Box 2, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0YY. A wonderful mixture of anarchic silliness and oddball synchronicity. Magazines like this make my day.

ZOOLOGY/NATURAL HISTORY

SOUTH WEST HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, Frank Gibbons, Acanthus, 59 St Marychurch Rd, Torquay, Devon. Entertaining and informative newsletter from a thriving organisation. Contains some quasi forscan oddments.

PORTSMOUTH REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER M Jones, 7 Hazelmere Rd, Southsea, Hants. Another thriving regional organisation whose publications ooze with authoritiveness and professionalism.

MILTON KEYNES HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY 15 Esk Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes. Excellent A5 magazine containing handy hints, informative articles and news of what appears to be an exciting organisation.

MAINLY ABOUT ANIMALS, 13 Pound Place, Shalford, Guildford, Surrey GU4 8HH. Veteran Zoologist Clinton Keeling edits this wonbderful A5 magazine which is, as the title says, mainly about animals. This is a genre of magazine that I and many others feared was lost forever and it comes with your editor's highest reccomendation.

WILD EQUID SOCIETY, 5 Percy Rd., London E16 4RB. An intelligent and well written journal about all the wild animals of the horse tribe. Well worth investigating.

ANIMAL KEEPER, PO Box 1, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5NE. As the name implies this is a magazine aimed at, and written by those who keep exotic wild animals. Glossy, but erudite. An excellent publication.

ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE ANIMAL KEEPERS, 8 Yewlands Walk, Ifield, Crawleigh, W. Sussex RH11 0QE. Britain needs organisations like this to safeguard hobbyists from draconian and often unnecessary legislation.

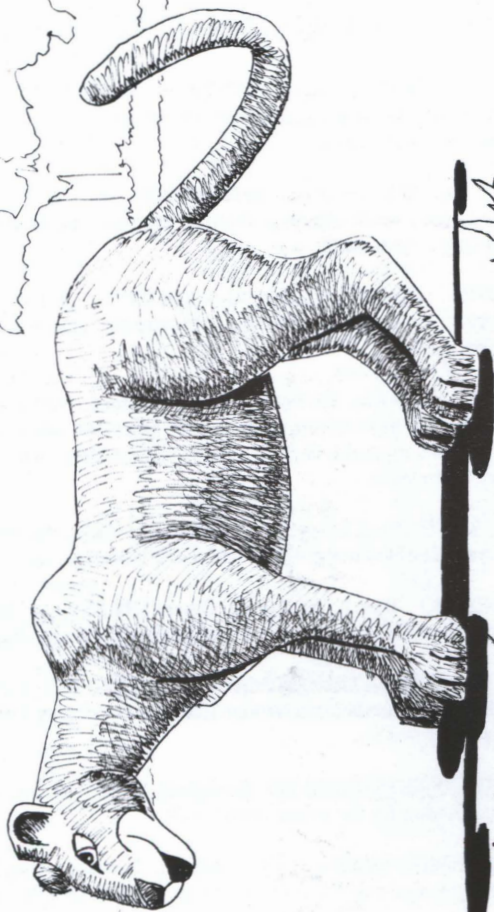
YOUNG HERPETOLOGISTS CLUB c/o Zoological Society of London, Regents Park, London NW1 4RY. Excellent organisation for the young reptile buff.

NATIONAL TERRAPIN PROJECT, 151 South Rd., Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 3NT. These are the people who keep a register of out of place Chelonians found in the UK. Invaluable.

ESSEX REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS SOCIETY, 6 Chestnut Way, Tiptree, Colchester, Essex, CO5 0NX. Another excellent and lively regional reptile society. Contains much invaluable information.

We also exchange with 'The Ceraalogist', Bipedia, Nessler, Promises and Disappointments, Touchstone, Annals 2, The Reptilian, Kingsbridge Natural History Society, South West Tarantula Society, 'The Bigfoot Record', and 'Track Record' but we have not received anything from them during the past three months!

Cartoon by Mort



MORT

FAR OUT! I KNOW IT'S BEEN HOT, BUT..... WOW!

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Typeset by Hens

put on your rubber chicken suit and take me for a ride